



# **PRESS NOTICE**

## **BILL NETTLES**

### **UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

### **DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN DARLINGTON COUNTY GAMBLING CASE**

**Columbia, South Carolina** ---- United States Attorney Bill Nettles stated today that Jeffrey Blanton, age 50, of Hamlet, North Carolina, pled guilty Wednesday in federal court in Florence, to operating an illegal gambling business, a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1955. United States District Judge Terry L. Wooten of Florence accepted the plea and will impose sentence after he has reviewed the presentence report which will be prepared by the U.S. Probation Office.

Evidence presented at the change of plea hearing established that in February 2011, Darlington County Sheriff's Office contacted the United States Secret Service (USSS) regarding an illegal gambling operation being conducted at Blanton's co-defendant's, Jammy Miller, residence in Darlington, South Carolina.

Darlington County Sheriff's Office executed a search warrant on January 22, 2011, at Miller's residence seizing approximately \$185,000, four vehicles, gambling paraphernalia, Miller's personal computer and cell phone, and approximately nine gambling

ledgers that detailed three million dollars in gross wagers over an eleven month period.

During the search, approximately 25 people, several from North Carolina, were arrested for violations of South Carolina Code Section 16-19-40 (unlawful betting and gambling).

Miller previously pled guilty and as part of Miller's plea agreement he agreed to forfeit: more than \$221,000.00, a 1999 Chevy Silverado truck, a 2000 Dodge Ram Truck, a 2001 Chevy Corvette, a 2005 BMW LI745, and two computers.

Blanton was operating an illegal gambling operation in Hamlet, North Carolina, and assisted Miller by sending some of his North Carolina customers to Miller's gambling business. Blanton also took some of his card dealers to Miller's business to assist in operating Miller's card games.

Mr. Nettles stated the maximum penalty Blanton can receive is a fine of \$250,000.00 and/or imprisonment for 5 years, plus a special assessment of \$100.00.

The case was investigated by Darlington County Sheriffs Office and agents of the United States Secret Service. Assistant United States Attorney William E. Day, II of the Florence office handled the case.

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